

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1280

As Reported by House Committee On:
Children & Family Services

Title: An act relating to the kinship care oversight committee.

Brief Description: Extending the kinship care oversight committee and its duties.

Sponsors: Representatives Pettigrew, Hinkle, Kagi, Walsh, Schual-Berke, McDonald, Clibborn, Dickerson, P. Sullivan, Roach, Orcutt, Darneille, Morrell, Wallace and Santos.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Children & Family Services: 2/2/05, 2/9/05 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Extends the Kinship Care Oversight Committee and updates the duties and responsibilities of the Committee.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Kagi, Chair; Roberts, Vice Chair; Hinkle, Ranking Minority Member; Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Darneille, Dickerson, Dunn, Haler and Pettigrew.

Staff: Sonja Hallum (786-7092).

Background:

In 2001, the Legislature directed the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) to study the prevalence and needs of families who are raising related children. In June 2002, the WSIPP issued a report describing the prevalence and characteristics of kinship care, needs of kinship care providers in the state, policies and services available in Washington and other states, and policy options that may increase appropriate kinship care placements.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) convened the Kinship Caregiver Workgroup to review the WSIPP report and develop a briefing for the Legislature identifying the policy issues related to kinship caregivers, the federal and state statutes associated with these issues, and options to address the issues.

The Kinship Care Workgroup presented recommendations to the Legislature in November 2002 including the recommendation that the Legislature mandate and fund an ongoing committee of relative caregivers and others to oversee the implementation of the recommendations in the report and continue future work on kinship care in the state.

In 2003, the Legislature passed HB 1233 which related to improving services for kinship caregivers. The bill created an oversight committee charged with the responsibility to monitor, guide, and report on kinship care recommendations and implementation activities. The committee was required to report to the Legislature by December 1, 2004 and was due to expire in January 2005.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Department of Social and Health Services is required to continue the Kinship Care Oversight Committee. The responsibilities of the committee are changed to include the requirement that the committee provide consultation on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the WSIPP kinship care report. The definition of kinship care that the committee is required to adopt is revised to include persons related by adoption.

A requirement is added that the DSHS consult with the Kinship Care Oversight Committee on its efforts to better collaborate and coordinate services to benefit kinship care families.

The requirement to report to the Legislature, and the expiration date for the committee, are not included in the bill.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute revises the requirement in the original bill that the Kinship Care Oversight Committee draft a definition of kinship care. The substitute adds persons who are related by adoption to the definition the committee is required to adopt.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: (Original bill) The Kinship Care Oversight Committee has done an outstanding job in making sure we are keeping our focus on kids who are in relative care and saving the state money. The committee worked hard to address the issues in the WSIPP report. There should be more education for kinship caregivers. The impact on relative caregivers is very important. We need to give relatives a voice. We need uniform definitions. Continuing the oversight committee is a wise idea. It will allow other issues in the

WSIPP report to be addressed and to add new members and address more issues. Many caregivers are seniors and it would be helpful to have more information.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Pettigrew, prime sponsor; Paula Duranceau; Cindy Hofer, Relatives as Parents Program and kin-adoptive parent; Kristie Lund, Relatives as Parents and Kindship Care Giver; Shelly Willis, Community Action Council; Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society; Ruth Shearer; and Edith Owen, Pierce County Relatives Raising Children.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.